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issue is received, the committee directs the implementation of the resolution proposal for each action issue before closing the action issue upon completion of the resolution proposal. An associated system is also provided.

REMARKS

In view of the following remarks, reexamination and reconsideration of this application, withdrawal of the rejections, and formal notification of the allowability of all claims as presented are earnestly solicited in light of the remarks that follow. Claims 1-10 are pending and, as indicated in the Office Action, Claims 1-10 have been rejected. Claim 1 is an independent claim directed to a method, implemented over a computer network, of collaboratively identifying, prioritizing, and resolving issues affecting a series or plurality of similar complex systems administered by an originating entity, while Claim 5 is an independent claim directed to an associated system capable of implementing such a method.

Specification

The Abstract was objected to in the Office Action because it exceeds 150 words. In response, the Abstract has been amended as suggested by the Examiner.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-3 and 5-7 were rejected in the Office Action as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,177,932 to Galdes *et al.*

The Galdes '932 reference is directed to a method and apparatus for network-based customer service. More particularly, in response to a client requesting help, a menu including three levels of interaction is displayed. One level of interaction is self-help searching in a database of information. A second level of interaction is asynchronous help, comprising interaction with an advisor. If the client selects synchronous help, the method includes the steps of alerting the advisor and displaying a list of sites previously visited by the client to the advisor, such that the advisor sees a display identical to that seen by the client. As described in the

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Galdes '932 reference, the customer is queried by the system to determine the customer's required priority of response to the customer's help request. If the customer chooses a low priority, the customer is directed to a self-help lookup. If a medium priority is designated, the customer is directed to an asynchronous collaboration where the customer may be helped by an advisor, an artificial intelligence system, or another customer. If the customer indicates a high priority, a synchronous collaboration is initiated, whereby the customer is provided with a first available advisor who may have particular expertise in the area in which the customer is seeking the help.

In contrast, the present invention, as particularly claimed, is directed to a system and method for collaboratively identifying, prioritizing, and resolving issues. That is, an issue and/or a comment can be posted by a customer and/or an originating entity, such as a manufacturer, on a discussion-capable electronic media accessible over a computer network. The discussion-capable electronic media is accessible by the customer, the originating entity, and a committee comprising a customer representative and an originating entity representative. The committee separates the issues into rejected issues and action issues, based at least partially on the posted comments. The committee thereafter prioritizes the action issues and sends a set of resolution directions for each action issue to the customer and/or the originating entity. The customer and/or the originating entity thereafter prepare and return a resolution proposal for each action issue to the committee. The committee then directs the implementation of the resolution proposal for the respective action issue and, once the implementation of the resolution proposal for an action issue is completed, directs closure of the corresponding action issue.

Accordingly, such a system and associated method as particularly claimed in the present invention provides a collaborative approach to issue resolution between customers and originating entities, that is neither taught nor suggested by the Galdes '932 reference. Thus, the Applicant submits that, in view of these differences between the Galdes '932 reference and the Applicant's invention as claimed, the Applicant's invention is not anticipated by Galdes '932 reference and is therefore patentable over the Galdes '932 reference.

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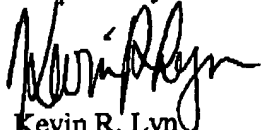
Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 4 and 8-10 were rejected in the Office Action as being obvious over the Galdes '932 reference in view of an M2 Presswire Report dated August 14, 2000 regarding Enigma, Inc. As previously discussed, Claim 1, upon which Claim 4 depends, and Claim 5, upon which Claims 8-10 depend either directly or indirectly, are not anticipated by the Galdes '932 reference. Thus, the Applicant submits that the present invention is patentable over the Galdes '932 reference and the 8-14-2000 M2 Presswire Report.

In conclusion, for the reasons set forth above, the Applicant submits that all claims now pending are in condition for immediate allowance. Accordingly, notice to such effect is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest opportunity.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,



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Version with Markings to Show Changes Made:

In the Abstract:

Please amend the Abstract as follows:

A method of collaboratively identifying, prioritizing, and resolving issues [affecting a series administered by an originating entity] is provided, [wherein the series comprises a plurality of similar complex systems and the method is implemented over a computer network]. An issue and/or a comment corresponding to the issue are received over [the] a computer network from a customer [via a first computer device] and/or an originating entity via [a second] respective computer devices[. The issue and/or the comment are] and posted on a discussion-capable electronic media accessible to the [first and second] computer devices, as well as a third computer device, [over the computer network, wherein the electronic media is configured to have a plurality of issues and a plurality of comments posted thereon]. The third computer device is [adapted to be] used by a committee comprised of a customer representative and originating entity representative[, wherein the committee is allowed, via the third computer device, to access the electronic media so as] to separate the posted [plurality of] issues into rejected issues and action issues, at least partially based on the posted [plurality of] comments. The committee [thereafter] prioritizes the action issues and sends [a set of] resolution directions for each action issue [over the computer network] to the customer and/or [the] a manufacturer. Once a resolution proposal for an action issue is received, the committee directs the implementation of the resolution proposal for each action issue [over the computer network] before closing the action issue upon completion of [the implementation of] the resolution proposal. [A corresponding] An associated system [for collaboratively identifying, prioritizing, and resolving issues] is also provided.